

# TRANSITION AGE YOUTH

All youth need assistance to transition to adulthood.

Though legal adulthood begins at age 18, we must recognize true adulthood as a multi-year process rather than a single chronological event. It is a highly variable process, dependent on social supports, life challenges, individual strengths, and opportunities.

Young people who have the privilege to attend college or supported vocational training often have the added privilege of relief from full responsibility for meeting their essential needs until they are 22 years old or more. A young person who does not have access to education or training beyond high school often has full adult responsibility for housing, employment, and medical care by age 18 or younger.

Plenty of recent research has increased the evidence base showing that, though highly variable, young people generally do not take on and are not equipped for full adult responsibilities until age 22 – 24, even if they are well attached to familial support systems. That research also shows that cognitive functioning in young men tends to mature slightly later than their female peers.

Although young adults with access to essential supports such as medical insurance, well-functioning adult guides, housing, and transportation may choose not to use them, having access can make all the difference in life-defining choices.

Access to education and job training are not the only supports necessary to informed career decision-making. Exposure to opportunities and mentoring, and the chance to learn from mistakes, success, and trusted adults in those settings can make all the difference to a young person’s success and well-being, and ultimately, the success and well-being of communities.

In contrast to the evidence of human maturity being marked at around age 24, in Vermont, 85% of the 16 and 17 year old youth charged with minor infractions of law that, by statute could be handled in the juvenile system, preventing a permanent criminal record, are processed in the adult court system. There are no known positive outcomes of addressing youth as adults for minor crimes. Some negative outcomes are well known: youth who enter the corrections system are at increased risk of staying involved in that system, are sometimes required

to associate with others who have criminal behaviors, and are less likely to be referred for family, and developmentally appropriate services. When a young person has a criminal record, they become ineligible for many jobs, and sometimes for higher education financial aid. If Vermont youth who commit criminal acts were, by default treated as youth, there is a ready option for transferring serious offenses to the adult court system.

Our highest risk youth need higher levels of public and community supports that can help them to overcome challenges and transition to productive lives in our communities.

The Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs supports prevention and early intervention services in Vermont communities for children, youth and families. As the primary prevention and youth justice advisory body, the Council supports policy and statutory change that will:

- Increase supports to children and youth with multiple risk factors.
- Support primary prevention efforts to all children and families.
- Enable 16–17 year-old youth who commit minor criminal offenses to be treated in the family, rather than adult court system.

*Additional Information:*

Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs  
<http://www.ahs.state.vt.us/CF CPP>

Children’s Trust Foundation <http://www.vtchildrenstrust.org/>

Office of Justice, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention  
<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/about/ojjdpact2002.html>

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## COUNCIL MEMBERS

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# CHILDREN & FAMILY COUNCIL FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS



## Annual Report January 2006

The mission of the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs is to advocate for and promote healthy children, families, and communities, and to eradicate child abuse, delinquency, and other forms of violence.

# CFCPP

## Vermont’s State Advisory Group to Primary Prevention and Delinquency Prevention.

### WHO WE ARE

- The Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs (CFCPP) consists of 21 members appointed by the governor with consent of the Senate.
- Members include community members, state agency personnel, representatives of private social services agencies and youth.

### WHAT WE DO

**Monitor** Vermont's compliance with the core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP):

1. Status offenders may not be securely detained.
2. Juveniles may not be detained in adult jails except to process and release.
3. Youth may not be subject to sight or sound contact with adult inmates while in detention.
4. Identify and reduce the rate of minority youth contact with the justice system.

Compliance with the JJDP serves two purposes:

1. Protects youth.
2. Ensures state eligibility for federal delinquency prevention funds.

**Oversee delinquency prevention and intervention grant funds:** A continuum of community-based grants that help to fund:

- Vermont Children’s Trust Fund, a public-private partnership that incorporates state appropriations, Vermont Children's Tax Check-off, private donations, and Vermont Children’s Trust Foundation income.
- The CFCPP provides grants to innovative and effective community-based prevention and early intervention programs for children, youth and families throughout the State of Vermont.
- The CFCPP and the Department for Children and Families monitor evaluation of grant outcomes and support effective practices.

**Advise and inform:**

- As the Juvenile Justice State Advisory group mandated by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, the Council advises state government.
- The CFCPP is committed to the premise that prevention and intervention, as early as possible, is cost-effective.
- For nearly three decades, the CFCPP has advised on policies and programs that promote healthy children, families and communities, has worked to reduce juvenile delinquency and make improvements to the juvenile justice system through grant making and the promotion of best practice.

**Set database priorities:** The CFCPP develops plans and recommendations. Justice and social well-being data are reviewed in order to define priorities.

1. *Three-year comprehensive Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan* defines data-based priority prevention needs and allocation of all JJDP funds. This plan includes the progress and corrective plans to maintain the core juvenile protections within the justice system.
2. *Annual recommendations* to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Congress, and the President regarding the priority needs in delinquency prevention.
3. *Annual report to the Governor* outlining compliance with core juvenile protections.
4. The *Vermont Primary Prevention Plan* incorporates prevention efforts from the Agency of Human Services, Departments of Education, Motor Vehicles, Employment and Training, Public Safety, Forests, Parks, and Recreation, Attorney General’s Office, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

## PRIORITIES

**Prevention Programs:** The CFCPP funds a variety of projects around the state designed to prevent youth from developing problematic behaviors that may require expensive interventions later. Project examples include:

- Mentoring,
- Early literacy and pre-school programs,
- Substance abuse prevention education,
- Out of school time and enrichment activities,
- Parent support and education, and
- Youth leadership opportunities.

These programs help to build skills, attitudes, and support to youth and families that make them stronger, healthier, and better able to address problems early, before substance abuse, delinquency, and early school dropout occur. [www.vtchildrenstrust.org](http://www.vtchildrenstrust.org)

**Systems Improvement** funding priorities:

The 3-year plan of priorities developed for FY 2007-2010 include:

- 1) **Juvenile justice systems analysis** (AHS, courts, prosecutors and defenders) that will define the impact and cost of originating charges against youth in the juvenile system. The outcome of this analysis will:
  - Provide a menu of options for state policy makers to consider in reforming the juvenile justice and corrections system related to youth and support the mandates of 3 V.S.A. § 3085c Commission on Juvenile Justice.
  - Inform legislators and policy makers of impact of such a system change
- 2) **Juvenile detention reform**, including:
  - Improved data and profile of involved youth to support objective, data-based decision making.
  - Detention and corrections placements appropriate to female offenders.

- Interventions that prevent youth of color from being detained more frequently than white youth.
  - Support for community-based placements that prevent youth from placement in secure detention.
- 3) **Youth development workforce training:**
    - Support the definition, standards, and workforce development that will provide youth interventions informed by best practice in youth development and enabling youth as decision-makers in their own lives.
  - 4) **Supports to transition aged youth:**
    - Develop plan to sustain youth transitional housing.
    - Support for statewide leadership to reform education and vocational supports to all youth, including those identified as ‘high-risk’.
    - Support statewide leadership and reform for community based mental health and substance abuse services for youth at the earliest effective intervention points.

**Status of Compliance with JJDP core juvenile justice protections in 2005:**

- **Monitor, educate and plan corrective** action with law enforcement and state agencies. These activities are on-going. In 2005, they resulted in corrective action to keep youth charged with minor offenses out of locked adult facilities.
- **Eliminated juvenile jail tours** through policy implementation that prevents youth from admission to secure adult jails or juvenile detention when referred by public authority for purposes other than allowed by state and federal statute.
- **Increase racial data collection** in order to analyze the extent of the disproportionate minority contact rate of juveniles in the justice system. Vermont has

- not yet achieved adequate data collection, but steps taken in 2005 and plans for subsequent years are expected to provide the data and analysis required by the JJDP Act.
- In 2005, Vermont participated in a **5-year audit** of the JJDP compliance monitoring system. The system was determined to be effective and only minor improvements were requested by the Office of Juvenile Justice.
  - **The CFCPP will fund a DMC Coordinator to:**
    - ☒ Monitor and analyze annual DMC data,
    - ☒ Inform and provide technical assistance to communities with DMC indicators,
    - ☒ Assist the CFCPP, state and local government, and communities in preventing the development of DMC.

**Evaluation and Promotion of Best Practice:**

- Grantees are trained and required to report outcomes achieved. Outcomes are in line with those priorities identified by CFCPP, the Office of Juvenile Justice, and Vermont’s Ten Outcomes for Social Well-Being.
- Outcome analysis informs the CFCPP, AHS departments, and federal offices on program effectiveness.
- CFCPP grantees are required to report on performance measures as defined by OJJDP.
- CFCPP grant readers receive training in effective program models. Assigned staff review grant progress to assure effectiveness as required by funding authority.

## HOW COMMUNITY PROJECTS ARE FUNDED

Federal funds are administered according to the following standards:

- Open, competitive requests for proposals that fit within federal and state priorities.
- Funds are designated to initiate effective program models that may be replicated. Funds are not available for long-term program maintenance.

- Programs may be funded for up to three years, pending adequate performance outcomes.
- A majority of community funding is designated for *systems change* efforts. Rather than supporting the same interventions for years, the emphasis is on creating change in existing state and community structures that will outlast grant funding.

The three-year timeframe promotes opportunities to develop promising approaches, geographically diverse grant distribution, and priority shifts based on emerging trends in youth needs as assessed by the data and the CFCPP three-year comprehensive plan.